

ABSTRACT

A method is provided for conducting a financial transaction by a purchaser with a merchant having an acquirer bank, over a communications network. The method includes the steps of sending a first authorization request using a pseudo account number associated with a real account number to a service provider which forwards a second authorization request to the issuer using the real account number and preferably a pseudo acquirer code associated with the service provider such that the response to the second request is based on the real account number and sent back to the service provider who preferably forwards a response to the first request preferably to the "real" acquirer. A message authentication code is further provided which includes transaction data, and where the authorization request is formatted as a standard payment card track having one or more fields including a discretionary field in which the message authentication code is placed.